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SÉDAN IN A STATE OF SIEGE.

FIFTY-FIVE years have passed away since the grandfathers of our tourists were pouring through Antwerp to visit the battle-fields of Waterloo and Quatre Bras. St Paul's Church, in that merchant city, was filled with the sick and dying, and Brussels and the surrounding villages were one vast hospital. It was probably only the decided attitude of the protecting powers which of late prevented Belgium from once more becoming the scene of the most tremendous slaughter of modern times, and obliged the two armies, when they edged up to her frontiers, to break their weapons against an imaginary wall. Two thousand unwounded Frenchmen, and about eight hundred Prussians, the latter all wounded severely, passed the little insignificant house marking the boundary, and were disarmed by the Belgian army, which had mustered there, hearing the tremendous cannonading going on within three or four miles' distance, and perhaps congratulating themselves that their king had been wise enough to keep clear of the war. The Prussians were removed to their own hospitals; but the Frenchmen, ragged and dirty, still haunt the streets of Antwerp and Brussels, lounging against door-posts, bargaining with apple-women, and staring among street boys and sight-seers in the middle of every crowd. The Belgian government feeds and lodges them, and gives the officers their half-pay, a debt which, it is to be hoped, France will some day feel herself called on to defray. They look, in general, very well satisfied with themselves, and not at all anxious to join in another campaign; but the Turcos, who seem to be hated equally by their friends and foes, have, in consequence of a disturbance, all been shut up in the citadel of Antwerp.

Not a fortnight had passed since the battle which resulted in Napoleon III. becoming the guest of the king of Prussia, and already all Belgium seemed to be rushing to the seat of war. A frightful description of the destitute state of the neighbourhood of Sédan, which had just appeared in one or two of the English newspapers, caused

travellers to carry with them as abundant a supply of provisions as if they were going to the Derby, and they seemed to regard the expedition with the same sense of enjoyment. A strain of soberness was imparted to them for a few moments by the appearance of a long train of cattle-vans and horse-boxes bearing the red-cross flag, which ran slowly past us. We stopped at a station at the same time with another, and the guard lifted up the side of one of the vans, and displayed a sad picture of human suffering—a row of figures lying on straw covered with blankets, most of whom had left a limb at Sédan; a few, able to stand or sit upright, put their heads out of another of the vans, with their faces tied up, their arms in slings, and one with his foot in splints. The passengers on the platform handed to them cigars, tobacco, chocolate, and other provisions, which they gratefully received, and then the train passed on, and we entered upon some of the picturesque scenery of the Ardennes.

Libramont, a miserable little station on the Luxembourg line, has been suddenly raised to much importance; for since the railway has been stopped, which runs directly to Sédan, it is the nearest way of getting there. Wagons, dirty cabs, an omnibus, ambulance carts, and every species of vehicle were assembled, waiting for hire, and most of them were employed. About a mile beyond the station, thirty-one wagons and ambulance carts, filled with wounded, passed on their way to the station, some without any attendant but the driver and postillions, and tortured by every jolt of the clumsy carriages, with their faces exposed to the rays of the noonday sun. A drive of about sixteen miles along the straight dreary road, by which the Emperor Napoleon was conveyed to Libramont on his way into Germany, brings us to Bouillon, once celebrated as the birthplace of the famous crusader Godfrey, but, under present circumstances, the very dirtiest of country towns, and overflowing with Belgian soldiers, French refugees, and tourists. Ambulance wagons; carts loaded with bread and hay; a perpetual succession of rickety drags; and pedestrian travellers,

passed continually day and night down the little narrow stone-paved streets, where some were paying five and ten francs each for a share in a hay-loft, and others, for want of even such accommodation, were compelled to walk about all night. Many of the richer families from Sedan had retired there, and were living most uncomfortably crowded, while their own homes were being used as hospitals. The castle of Bouillon stands in a commanding situation on a hill overlooking the town, and a church, as plain externally as a Scotch kirk, lies immediately below it. The river Meuse, winding between high banks, divides the principal street, and is crossed by an old stone bridge. The bright green woods around have been the resort of wolves since the beginning of the campaign, frightened away from the north-east of France. At present, little is seen of them, but probably they will become rather troublesome neighbours to the farmers when the cold weather sets in.

The French frontier was crossed without any of the usual formalities, for there are no custom-house officers to keep it now; and half a mile beyond, knapsacks, broken weapons, and cartouches were to be seen scattered on each side of the road, and graves marked by two sticks tied together with grass in the form of a cross. Every cottage in the villages close round Sedan had hung out a red-cross flag, to shew that a wounded man was being tended in them; and near the walls, the remains of the fight were spread over the gardens and fields—Prussian helmets, knapsacks, and bayonet-sheaths being most numerous, with two or three horses still left unburied. We met many of the inhabitants of Bazailles with the property they had been able to rescue from the fire piled on their backs, or else seated on the top of it in little carts. Some of them have also encamped in huts like Indian wigwams, on the slope of a neighbouring hill.

Sedan lies quite in a hollow, from which you have to ascend every way out of the town. It is surrounded by high fortifications, and a moat, formed from the river Meuse, which runs through the valley. A Prussian sentinel, carrying a needle-gun, was perched on the top of the fortification overlooking the Bouillon gate, which we entered over a draw-bridge, conducting us into a stone-paved street. The houses are as high as is usual in old French towns, and rather narrow. Several had been destroyed by the bombardment, but these were at the back, and not visible to the street. Some of the French wounded prisoners who were well enough to leave the hospitals were sitting on the door-steps as we entered, and there were numbers of Prussian soldiers walking about. These latter seem on very good terms with the small French shopkeepers, and are excellent customers to the market-women. It was not unusual to see six or eight round one elderly dame, trying to make her comprehend the amount of apples or nuts that they wanted to buy, and one shop where I was in the habit of buying bread was generally filled with them. One day I saw a slight dispute going on between a Prussian soldier and the baker's wife about the change for a thaler. The soldier called in some one from the street to act as umpire, who decided in favour of the woman; and he was going away apparently satisfied, when she called him back and gave him the rest of the money that he thought he was entitled to. Another day I went into a shop, and six Prussians entered it to buy some eggs. The

woman of the shop accidentally upset the money-drawer as she was looking for change. They all laughed, and so did she, but two of them immediately assisted her to pick it up. I thought she would not have seen much of it again if they had happened to be Zouaves in a German shop.

Both the Roman Catholic church and the French Reformed Protestant were filled with wounded at this time; the latter contained more than a hundred, but they were fast being transferred to more comfortable quarters. The Roman Catholic church in Sedan was lined with pews like an old-fashioned country church in England; but the Protestant church had movable open seats, so was the better fitted of the two for such a purpose. Nothing could have been more devoted than the conduct of some of the principal families in the place during and after the siege. I will not mention their names, lest it should not be agreeable to them; but they are well known to all connected with the ambulance hospitals in Sedan. One family took in seventy wounded, and during two days had nothing to give them but chocolate and a ham. The French army had cleared the town of provisions; and two large trains containing bread and stores, that were coming to supply the garrison, were captured by the Prussians outside the walls; so that, when the conquerors entered the town, they found absolutely nothing; and I know of two wealthy families at least who for two days could not obtain a slice of bread. One of these sent out a cook with gold in his hand to buy some wherever he could find it. He obtained a portion of the last loaf which any baker possessed, and it was torn from him, and divided by the hungry French soldiers, before he could carry it across the street. The life of one young Bavarian was thought to have been saved by this forced abstinence. He had been severely wounded internally, and the doctor said it was quite a hopeless case. The kind French pastor into whose house he had been carried desired that he should be allowed to remain, saying: 'If the poor young man is to die, we will at least do our best to make him comfortable while he lives.' He had commanded a company of engineers who had thrown the bridge over the Meuse which had enabled the Prussians to gain the height from which they bombarded the town. He became delirious, and fancied he was still building the bridge, and tossed himself from side to side of the bed, exclaiming: 'Make haste, or the bridge will be cut before we can cross it! Make haste before the French can interrupt us!'

The doctor had said that if there was a hope of saving his life, he must by all means be kept still; and his good French hostess, who nursed him herself, only effected this by standing at the end of the bed, and fixing her eyes upon him, telling him that if he did not keep perfectly still, the French would see him, and shoot him down before he could finish the bridge, though all the time the words almost choked her, and the tears ran down her cheeks when she thought of the humiliation of France. The young man recovered without inflammation coming on, which had been the great fear, and which, as he was remarkably strong, might have only been hastened if they had been able to give him the food for which he craved. But nothing could have been more heart-rending than the request of the other

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wounded, who were sinking from exhaustion for bread, when there was none to give them, while the doctors were declaring that they would die if some nourishment was not found. For the first night they slept soundly, even when there had not been time to dress their wounds; but the second day they began to rail at Sedan, saying what a town it was if it could not feed its own wounded, while their almost broken-hearted attendants were in an equally famished state. On the third day, the Prussians began to bring food into the town, and though it had to be distributed very sparingly at first, three weeks after the siege, bread, cheese, and butter were cheaper than in Belgium, where the prices have been raised in consequence of the war; and wagon-loads of bread, hay, and other provisions—twenty or thirty at a time, each drawn by two, four, or six horses—used to stream into the town every day, and almost every hour of the day; while vegetables were brought from Bazailles and the neighbourhood, and sold in the market much more reasonably than in an English country town. At the time of the battles, the district was soaked with rain, so that the fire did not extend to the trees or vegetation; and when I saw the heap of blackened ruins which represents Bazailles, the apple and damson trees at the backs of the houses were uninjured, and covered with fruit.

The most unprofessional eye must marvel at the fortifications of Sedan being preserved since modern artillery was introduced. On one side, the hill rises as high as the walls; and before the bombardment, after the defeat at Carignan, the French held this hill, but abandoned it to retreat into the town; upon which it was immediately occupied by the Prussians, who dragged their guns up to the top, and at once commanded the entire place. A French eye-witness, who had nobly assisted the wounded in an open square in front of her house, while the bombardment was at its height, and the soldiers were being struck down by the shot and shell all round, described the cannonading as being like two tremendous thunderstorms going on at once. She saw the Emperor ride out to the last battle, but he returned two hours afterwards before the defeat. I was assured that more than one of the generals could not leave his bed early enough in the morning to take any part in it, but that while all the peaceful citizens had long been roused by the noise of the guns, they were still sleeping, and their regiments were led into action by the subalterns. The first sign of the defeat of the French army was the wounded riderless horses which rushed back into the town; first a few, then increasing—chasseurs, lancers, all mingling together; horses bearing the trappings of every regiment in the service, yet still no riders, and their flanks stained with blood. It was long before the citizens would believe but that the French had gained a victory. Surely it was impossible that any nation in the world could beat eighty thousand Frenchmen; till at last the fact began to dawn upon them, and was confirmed by the appearance of the disordered fugitives. The French whom I met in Sedan seemed unanimous in condemning the Emperor as the cause of the war. They said France did not want war, and the Prussians would not have attacked her unprovoked, but that he had been shamefully misled by those around him as to the resources of the empire, and the preparation which was necessary for a campaign.

The generals also came in for a large share of the blame. One marched his men at the rate of two hours a day to join the corps already at the front, and when he passed a small battalion of Prussians on the road, dared not touch them; and others had shewn themselves scarcely equal to cope with a common riot. But it was natural that the irritation should be very great against those who had conducted this most unfortunate war. The higher class of French civilians in Sedan were very much to be pitied, for they were completely cut off from Paris, where most of them had relations, and received no news whatever from the capital. Many of them had no money but what was invested in Paris banks, and they saw no newspapers except when the English brought them; and indeed they had long ceased to give credit to their own. It must, however, be admitted that no invading army was ever more inoffensive than the Prussians who are at the present time quartered in Sedan. They are a steady, respectable-looking set of men, and pay most scrupulously for everything they buy, as, according to a royal mandate, the smallest theft is to be punished with death. Still, they pay in German money, which is a great grievance to the shopkeepers, who fear that they may not be able to dispose of it when the war is over. The different value was also perplexing to them, and I was often asked to explain it, and also if I knew German, and would act as interpreter between a Prussian and some one else who only knew French.

No one is allowed without a special order to walk about the town after nine o'clock, or to enter it after half-past six (the gates were closed at six for the first fortnight after the siege), so that I never saw a French town so quiet and orderly as Sedan was in the evening, and I never heard of anything like drunkenness or riotous behaviour during the day. Some of the French prisoners were attached to the ambulance corps, and did not seem at all distressed by their position, neither did those who were recovering from their wounds, and able to air themselves in the street; but there were a few of those still in the hospital who grieved much over their defeat, and the prospect of going into Prussia as soon as they were fit to be moved, instead of returning to their friends: and this feeling seriously retarded the progress of their recovery.

The lodging-house keepers and smaller hotels must have reaped a harvest lately in Sedan, for they charged most extortionate prices for very bad accommodation; but the two chief hotels, *De l'Europe* and *La Croix d'Or*, maintained their original tariff, though it was very difficult to obtain a room in one of them. The horse-butchers must also have made their fortunes, for there were three established in the town before the war, as the French generally have quite got over any prejudice against such meat; and since the battles, the Prussians were thankful to dispose of the dead and wounded horses to anybody who would take them off their hands. A sound horse, in very fair condition, was sold at that time for nine francs; and the thinner, more worn steeds for five and six francs, as they roamed stableless in the neighbourhood of the battle-field, trying to get into the town, and gnawing the young trees—all forage being then extremely scarce. The Belgians have bought a great many of them, and round Bouillon, they are now feeding them up and teaching them to draw.

A source of profit has been opened to the peasantry in the neighbourhood by the sale of the innumerable relics of the accoutrements of the combatants, which were left at first to decay on the fields, after the contents of the knapsacks and other things that could really be made useful were carried away. These are now being collected by the poorest of the people to meet the demands of the tourists who arrive in the evening by the diligence from Bouillon, and leave again by the same conveyance at eight o'clock the next morning, and have therefore no time to collect such things for themselves. Still, there must be many workmen in the neighbourhood who are entirely without employment, and the Prussians have lately tried to induce the manufacturers to reopen their works, for the sake of occupying some of them.

At one time thirty thousand wounded men were accommodated in Sedan and the neighbourhood; but the Prussians lost no time in removing the slight cases to a distance, and dispersing the rest as much as possible; for the town had originally been completely filled with fourteen thousand civil inhabitants, and there was a fear of fever and cholera if so many remained concentrated in so small a space. Seven wagon-loads were sent off from the German hospitals the day after I arrived. They seemed in a very weak state to undergo a drive of thirty miles or more to a station, and some were very ill provided with cushions or pillows. Baron Larrey, the celebrated French surgeon in the wars of the first Empire, was of opinion that a journey, by promoting circulation, was beneficial to the cure of wounds. Even with the unenlightened surgery of his day, he was particularly successful in his treatment; so it is to be hoped that his judgment on this point was correct.

The educated French in Sedan profess to be very grateful for the valuable services which the English have rendered to their wounded in this terrible crisis of the national fate. Two French ladies who have been themselves indefatigable in nursing the wounded, told me that it was creating a better feeling than had existed towards England for many years, and that they could never forget her kindness. They spoke warmly of the admirable management of the large Anglo-American hospital which has been established in the Asfeldt barrack on the top of the walls, and has nursed more Prussians and French than any other in the town; and they said it was acknowledged that the English had preserved Sedan from the miseries of fever and cholera by the enormous amount of disinfecting fluids which had been sent out by the Society in St Martin's Lane. The English have also partly preserved it from famine by sending preserved provisions and all things necessary for the hospitals from London and Belgium, instead of drawing them entirely from the town. The nursing and medical attendance of the English hospitals at Sedan are worthy of the nation which equipped them; but the Asfeldt barrack, though at first sight it seems just suited for an ambulance, is found on trial not so healthy as some of those buildings where the patients have been guarded with less care and fewer luxuries. It is bomb-proof, and in consequence, the great thickness of the walls prevents it from being as thoroughly ventilated as could be wished, though, when I saw it, every window was kept open, and the air blowing straight through the wards. The lady nurses who superintend it arrived

just after the surrender, having passed through the midst of the horrors of the battle-fields, sleeping on straw, and insufficiently fed. It was remarked in the Crimea that the officers who had been brought up in the greatest luxury were able to endure more trying hardships while they lasted than those who had been nurtured in a rougher sphere; and the same may perhaps apply to these ladies, who have undergone far more real privations than usually fall to a woman's lot, even when compelled by necessity, and not by choice, to earn her bread.

Some of the wounded soldiers in the hospitals told me that they could easily have shot the king of Prussia, for he was so much exposed on the battle-field; but that they had strict orders not to do so, as the Emperor was extremely anxious to take him prisoner. This modern Dandolo fought at Leipzig, where he took his first view of Napoleon I. through a spy-glass lent to him by Sir Hudson Lowe, and shewed boyish delight at the idea of being opposed to him in the field. Two years later, he was destined to meet the Emperor once more at Waterloo. Truly, his mother's wrongs have been amply avenged.

'The provisions of the treaty of the 6th not having been realised, the town of Sedan is declared in a state of siege,' &c., says a placard dated the 14th of September, and signed by the Prussian commander, which is posted about on the walls. 'The retreat will be sounded at nine o'clock in the evening; and in case of an alarm, the inhabitants will be expected to light up their houses during the night.' The last clause is particularly necessary, as there are no street lamps; so that when it grew dark, and the inhabitants had retired to bed to save candles, the town was in a state of primeval darkness. The public notices, of which a fresh one appeared nearly every day, pasted over proclamations of the Empress Regent and orders of the Emperor, were framed in very courteous terms. One day the inhabitants were informed that all the loaded rifles picked up from the field were to be fired off the next day, so that they need not feel any alarm when they heard the sound. Another day, the mayor was requested to make it known that no one *sans but* was to wander over the battle-field to pick up relics and other articles left there, as certain persons had been authorised to do it by the garrison. Another day we were told that three of the gates were to be closed day and night, to lighten the duties of the garrison.

The second of these orders was not very strictly enforced, except as regarded guns and swords; but the third order was rather inconvenient, as one of the closed gates opened on to the direct road to Bouillon, so that passengers leaving Sedan for Belgium had to go out through the Balan gate, and ascend a steep hill, passing through a narrow gorge before they could gain the necessary route. When I left Sedan in the diligence for Libramont, all the passengers were asked to dismount at the bottom of this hill, as the coach was much overloaded. We had scarcely done so, when we saw a horse's head appear in the winding lane cut through the hill; and it proved to be only the first sign of a series of nineteen heavy ambulance wagons, each drawn by six horses, and all loaded with bread, shot, and other heavy stores; and as one thing could not pass another, we, of course, had to wait. Our driver, habited in a blouse, stood cracking his whip, but otherwise placidly looking on; but my French

companions were in a great state of excitement lest the delay should cause them to miss their train, and stormed uselessly at the Prussians, who were hanging on to the backs of their wagons, to act as drags, while the horses were slipping and staggering down the steep descent. At last we were able to proceed, and a few moments afterwards were almost upset by coming in contact with a cart; and it was with severely tried springs and very scratched wheels that we at last found ourselves fairly started on the Belgian road. So far as I could see, Sedan was resting quietly enough under the burden imposed upon her by the war. One night a few Frenchmen were heard marching down the street singing the *Marseillaise*, about an hour after the retreat; whereupon the Prussian guard turned out from the Place du Rivage, and quietly dispersed them, sending them off in detachments in the direction of their various homes, where they had the sense to remain. This, however, was an exception. Between seven and eight o'clock the children used to come out and play in the streets, dancing and skipping about, and shouting in a manner that did anybody's heart good to see; for although Prussian soldiers were grouped everywhere, no one seemed in the least afraid of them; and as they marched in order along the street, the *bourgeois* threaded their way through their ranks without any hesitation to cross over to the other side.

One of the saddest sights was the fresh German recruits; middle-aged men, having the appearance of labourers, who had all probably left a wife and family to mourn for them at home. The number of spectacled men, both officers and privates, amongst the Germans was also very curious, as they were evidently students who had read hard, and were now obliged to turn their pens into swords. On Sunday, both the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches were filled with them, a Bavarian Roman Catholic regiment happening to be in the town; their behaviour was a striking contrast to that of the French, whose soldiers appear to think that their calling exempts them from all religious obligations, and who were smoking in great numbers with their hands in their pockets, in the market-place, which was just outside the church, and where buying and selling were going on quite as briskly as on any other day in the week.

Sedan contains some very good houses, and wears, on the whole (apart from its present garrison), rather a German aspect. The Place de Turenne contains a statue of the marshal of that name, who was born here; and, following the course of streets in a straight line from this spot, we come to the Hôtel des Pauvres, an ancient house of charity which receives the aged poor, and keeps them in most comfortable quarters till relieved by death. Here they lay, in snowy bedclothes under *duvets*, unmolested by the enemy throughout the siege and the surrender of Sedan, though the shells and cannon-balls must have passed over them to reach the centre of the town; and the Prussians must have marched close by them when they entered it to receive the swords and weapons of eighty thousand men. At a short distance outside the gate, nearest to this end of the town, lies the cemetery, which is now crowded and going to be enlarged. One huge grave received the bodies of those who had been found dead close by, and many smaller ones contain the remains of some of the officers who have subsequently died in the

hospitals. The hill from which the Prussians bombarded the town is very near, and from it you may obtain a splendid panoramic view of the country round. The line of railway, now useless, winds like a thread through the plain, the château of Bellevue standing on rising ground, with the fields in front still marked all over with horses' feet, and the large glass window of the room where the king of Prussia met the Emperor flashing in the rays of an unclouded sun. The park of artillery captured by the Prussians, a vast collection of cannon carriages, mitrailleuses, and ambulance wagons, were ranged just below; and on the hill itself, gun stocks, scraps of letters, and other remains (among them I found a piece of a German Bible), mingled with the potatoes, which grew in a luxuriant crop at the time it was first occupied, when it proved to be the most important post which the Prussians had yet obtained since the beginning of the war.

But, after all, the chief point of interest in Sedan lies in the hospitals among the men who have perilled their lives for *la gloire*, or, as the inscription on the Prussian eagles runs, *mit Gott für König und Vaterland*. How different is even the most ill-managed military hospital in France or Germany at the present day, to the best field ambulance of the days of the Peninsular War or the Russian retreat! As the world advances, human life is more prized, and though it has been most recklessly sacrificed in the present campaign, yet, once in the hands of the surgeons, the wounded soldier knows that no means, skill, or money at their disposal will be spared to insure his recovery; and since the introduction of chloroform, the deaths per cent. of those who have lost a limb have been reduced to an extent scarcely contemplated; it seems wonderful that even so late as the Crimean War there should have been any experienced medical men found to object to its use. The English, the Belgians, and the Dutch have all come forward liberally to lend their assistance to their suffering fellow-men; and the riches and generosity of Great Britain with its subscription to the fund for the Sick and Wounded of upwards of two hundred thousand pounds, is a matter of astonishment to the whole continent. The last communication by railway between Paris and the north-east of France was to convey the French Protestant Evangelical Ambulance to the seat of war. Besides the doctor and dressers, it was accompanied by two abbés, a French Protestant pastor, several young students who volunteered to act as *infirmiers*, or orderlies, and regular professional *infirmiers*, one of whom had served throughout the Italian campaign, and three Protestant deaconesses, who all attended to the wounded when under fire during the bombardment. This ambulance established hospitals in a private house in the Place de la Halle; in a manufactory at Pouilly-sur-Meuse, where the beds were actually placed between the machines; and in three country villas outside the town, standing in the midst of gardens. At first, many of the patients were obliged to be laid on straw, and covered with railway-rugs; then came mattresses and blankets, with a few sheets, from England, and at last bedsteads. It was, of course, a serious drawback to the supplies being regularly transmitted to Sedan by the two societies in London, that the station was so far from the town—and the demand for all conveyances so great at

Libramont; yet wagons loaded with boxes marked by the red cross seemed to be streaming every day into Sédan; and their contents were most fairly distributed among the places where they were most required.

Everything that arrived at a French hospital was turned to some use. Pieces of calico too small or too coarse to be made into anything else, were still fit for cloths or pocket-handkerchiefs till better ones could be procured. Ladies' dressing-gowns and night-gowns were made to do duty as shirts, and the black face of a Turco might be seen rising from the middle of an elaborately embroidered frill. It should always be remembered, when providing for a hospital after a battle, that there is certain to be a scarcity of shirts. The under garment of each wounded man has been first torn by shot, and is then often curtailed still more to make a bandage for the injured part. In the case of a defeated army, his knapsack has frequently been thrown away to facilitate his flight, and he is brought into the hospital with nothing but the stained and ragged clothes that he has got on. In the French ambulance hospitals outside Sédan, there were wounded men who had been actually rescued from the heaps of dead who were waiting to be buried. Some had lain several days under soaking rain on the field, and had been robbed by the country people, who perhaps believed them to be dead; and it was sad to see the very little property which they had to take away with them when they left the hospital to go as prisoners into Prussia—no knapsack, tin bottle, neat cooking-tin, or any of the usual outfit of a French soldier, but generally nothing but a knife, or a little tobacco tied up in the pocket-handkerchief furnished to him from the Society's stores. The liberality of the subscribers, however, enabled a railway-rug or a blanket, and about two francs in money, to be given to each of the wounded when he went away. The moment of departure was always most melancholy. The Prussians were very strict in removing the patients as soon as possible, and, indeed, they were often taken away before they seemed fit to go. Large ambulance carts, or open wagons with straw at the bottom, each drawn by two or four enormous Algerian mules, used to drive up to the door, and pale crippled forms were carried out of the house by the infirmiers, and lifted into them—with pillows supplied to those who had been wounded in the head, while the rest had nothing under their necks except an extra heap of straw. A provision of wine, bread, chocolate, and cigars was sent with them, as there was a seven hours' drive without halting before them, and perhaps far more when they had reached Libramont; moreover, they parted from their nurses, no one knowing exactly who there would be to look after them at the other end of their journey, although they were utterly helpless, hardly one among them being yet able to walk. It certainly seemed as if it would be much better for both parties, were the Prussians to permit all those who had lost a limb, and were quite incapable of serving again, to go to their own homes instead of into Prussia; but I had the satisfaction of hearing from an English lady who had been through all the German hospitals, that nothing could exceed the kindness and attention which was bestowed on the French wounded prisoners; and that, in fact, they were far better off in the German hospitals than in their own.

A Prussian came one day to this French ambulance to inquire if it had received a Zouave, who had enlisted under a feigned French name, but was in reality a German, and now sought by his friends. The Zouave regiments seem to contain a very miscellaneous assemblage. Many of the wounded in the 11th French ambulance hospitals were sailors, who had belonged to a naval brigade which had been brought to serve at Sédan. One to whom I talked was a Strasbourg man, and called himself a German, which language he asked me to speak with him. He was not believed to be very dangerously wounded, but fretted much about being a prisoner, and seemed hardly to care to live. When this is the case, there is but little chance of recovery, as strength of body is scarcely more required to surmount a bad wound than strength or elasticity of mind. Many of the private soldiers in the hospitals have been shopkeepers both in Paris and the provinces, or are the sons of professional men, for since the war began no conscript is allowed to buy a substitute. One shewed me his card to prove that he was German, and not French, but unhappily for him he had been born on French soil. The French officers who were at Sédan were generally nursed in private houses, or in the French hospitals were given separate rooms. One in the 11th Ambulance Hospital outside Sédan bore a Crimean medal, which had been bestowed upon him by the Queen when she visited Paris; he had also served in Italy and China. Day after day I used to see wounded officers being conveyed out of the town in private carriages, most of them being on their parole, and allowed to go where they pleased. The Prussians at first buried all their dead prisoners, even the Turcos, with military honours; but the deaths had now become too numerous for this practice to be carried out.

Liebig and other inventors of preserved provisions have been especial benefactors to ambulance hospitals. The preserved Australian beef and mutton sent out from England packed in tins was by far the best and most nutritious meat to be obtained in Sédan. Liebig's essence of meat keeps up a perpetual supply of excellent beef-tea; and the essence of coffee, and condensed Swiss or Irish milk, made unexceptionable *café au lait*. No wine stronger than *vin ordinaire* seemed to be generally used in the French hospitals, but it was evidently sufficient, as there were very few cases of fever and a small proportion of deaths.

At Balan, a village outside the gate leading to Bazailles from Sédan, two hospitals were established in the Mairie and a large private house. These were under the medical superintendence of Dr Frank (the French hospital just mentioned was under that of M. Tillaux), and nursed by some English Sisters of Mercy. That in the private house was chiefly occupied by Bavarians, some of whom were desperately wounded. The Prussian soldiers fire low, and generally seem to hit their enemies in the leg, and the needle-gun has a small pointed bullet, which does not make a very ghastly wound; but the mitrailleuse and chassepot used by the French strike in the body, as a rule, with the most horrible force, crushing all before them; and when the shot is extracted, it appears like a jagged, molten piece of lead. I was told by one of the Sisters who attended upon them that these Bavarians were a very patient, devout set of men.

Chambers's
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Their rooms were still hung with pictures and looking-glasses, and the mantel-pieces contained gilded clocks and other ornaments, which had belonged to the last occupants, and presented a curious contrast to the beds stretched on the floor. A few houses were burned at Balan, and one which was completely destroyed except the walls, still contained an iron bedstead, and the remains of a vine growing over the doorway. About two miles beyond Balan lies Bazailles, on the same road, the ditches being lined with Prussian helmets and knapsacks the whole extent of the way. A charity-box has been placed on one of the trees at the entrance to the village, with an inscription stating that as mendicity is forbidden in the district, your alms are requested on behalf of the victims of Bazailles. A few steps farther, and you see the whole length of the ruined, blackened street; not one house left with a roof to shelter the poorest inhabitant—the railway station, the church, the restaurants, the Mairie, the shops, all a heap of stones. A few little children had collected bullets, Prussian helmets, and other remains, and were sitting solemnly before them presiding over a sale; a few workmen were endeavouring to repair a house. Within the four walls of the church all is utter desolation, and the stone altar and marble chancel pavement are reduced to fragments. The destruction of Bazailles was accomplished by a Bavarian troop, who were fired at by the peasantry when the battle was over, and took this means of reducing them to submission. The Prussians had originally proclaimed that they did not make war upon civilians, and that when civilians opposed them, they would be treated as ordinary criminals; and in those villages where the people have not organised a peasant warfare, they have faithfully kept to the compact. But the French peasantry have been excited by their superiors, and can hardly be expected to understand the nice distinctions of the articles of war. Twenty-one were shot at Sédan after the surrender, because they continued to aim at the Prussian officers from the cellars or the tops of the houses, so that it was becoming unsafe for a Prussian to walk along the street; but there was great exaggeration in the first accounts of the burning of Bazailles as received through Paris. It is enough that they fired the houses separately, and though belonging to a Roman Catholic regiment, that they insulted the image of the Virgin, which they found in the church, by placing a helmet upon her head, without attributing to them the wanton massacre of women and children. A number of wounded Bavarians were left both here and at La Chapelle, with bread and water placed by them, but with no other provision for their attendance. At La Chapelle, the Dutch ambulance took compassion upon them, and here they have been carefully nursed by an English lady, and some English Sisters of Mercy, provided by the National Society. The château of Montvilliers, which was used for a hospital, is on the outside of the village, and most prettily situated in a small park, still trampled down by the feet of the horses engaged in the battle, the trees broken, and the hedges torn. Farther on lie Pouilly and Carignan. On my way back to Sédan, I saw some French peasants planting a flower on a grave by the road-side. I asked if it was the grave of a French soldier, but heard that it was that of a Bavarian; so my companion, who had

travelled through Germany, told them how well their countrymen were treated there, which evidently much pleased them. As we returned through the gate of Sédan, where there is a guard-house, and about six Prussians generally seated near it, I saw a tipsy French peasant, who preceded us, go and shake hands violently with them all in turn. They looked a little surprised, but evidently understood the state of the case. Drunkenness is said to be a vice much increasing among the French; but at Sédan I hardly ever saw it, except in the persons of two or three old working-men; I never saw a drunken German.

It is impossible to look at Bazailles, which stands out in the minds of the French people as the great atrocity of the war, without reflecting what the disgrace to civilisation would have been had the result of the first battles been reversed, and the Turcos and Zouaves been let loose upon Baden and the German states of the Rhine, as was the original intention of the French Emperor. Some of the Turcos were admitted into both the English and French hospitals, where, though many of them could speak nothing but Moorish, not even French, they were still harmless enough. One of them I used to see sitting on his bed nearly all day, with his blanket pulled up round him like a New Zealander's, and staring with black expressionless eyes; but in the German hospitals, and among the wounded on the field of battle, they have shewn themselves perfect savages—attacking the doctor who was dressing their wounds, and horribly torturing a helpless foe. The government of the late Emperor must have had a most debasing effect upon his subjects, if a system of warfare that would have blackened the fame of a general in the last century, could have been approved by them now; but it is satisfactory to see that such a system is condemned by the really educated portion of the French people. The present moment, however, is hardly the time to throw a stone at the French people, in the very midst of an almost unprecedented defeat, the causes of which must be obvious to every thinking man who has attentively watched the progress of current events. 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord,' was the appropriate text of a sermon which I heard preached by the French Protestant minister in Sédan. Few were there to hear it, but it was calculated to make a deep impression on his reflecting countrymen; and it is to be hoped that the bitter lesson they are now receiving may not be entirely thrown away, but that out of the ashes of the Empire may arise a purer, a more powerful, and a really civilised France.

BRED IN THE BONE.

CHAPTER XLII.—IN THE TOILS.

SOLOMON started for Gethin on the ensuing morning; but his wife did not, as usual, find his departure a relief, since Balfour remained behind. Her last instructions from her husband were to treat this unwelcome guest with marked consideration, and to let him have his way in everything. He also hinted, though it was scarcely necessary to insure her obedience, at certain brilliant prospects which were about to present themselves, through Balfour's means, if he were only kept in good

humour. Harry would have much preferred to relinquish his favour at the price of his absence, but not so her son. Notwithstanding the disparity in their ages, he and this new acquaintance were already fast friends. The latter had laid himself out to please the lad, and had succeeded; partly, perhaps, from the very novelty of companionship, for Charley knew no one in town, and was tired of taking his pleasure therein alone, but chiefly through his store of agreeable anecdotes, all illustrative of the enjoyments which wealth conferred, with which Balfour tickled his ears.

'In a few years—perhaps sooner, who knows?—all these things of which I speak will be within your own means. You will be rich; and he who is so can please himself in almost everything. You can then marry your Agnes, if you will, without fear of being disinherited; or, what is better and more likely, you may choose from a score of Agneses; or even take them all.'

He had a light amusing way with him, this Balfour, that hid the cynicism which would otherwise have jarred upon his young companion; for Charles, though selfish and fond of pleasure, was good-natured, and had not reached that period of life when our sherry must needs not only be dry, but have bitterness in it. He was genuinely fond of his mother; yet even in this short time, Balfour, as she well knew, had taught him to disobey her; not setting her at open defiance, indeed, but regarding her advice and remonstrances with a sort of tender contempt. She meant all for his good, his mentor admitted, but women had not much knowledge of the world; and if a young man was not to be his own master at eighteen, he must look to be in leading-strings all his life. Harry perceived her darling's plastic nature changing daily for the worse in the hands of this crafty potter; and though it was an admission humiliating to her, as a mother, to make, she made it to Mrs Basil in her sick-room.

'Mr Balfour is doing my Charley harm,' she said. 'He is an altered boy already, and yet my husband talks as though we are never to be rid of the man. What money, what gain, can ever compensate for the demoralisation of our child?'

'Nothing, indeed,' said Mrs Basil quietly. 'But have a little patience. Is not this gentleman going on Friday?'

'Yes, but he will come back again. It is only some business that calls him into Midlandshire. He does not even take all his luggage away. I have a great mind to tell him point-blank that his presence in this house—at all events in Mr Coe's absence—is unwelcome; but I dare not do it—I am afraid.'

'Yes, your husband would be very angry, without doubt,' said Mrs Basil thoughtfully.

'That is not it. I am afraid of the man himself. He reminds me of that hateful creature—what is he?—in the opera, for which Mr Aird gave us tickets, and which Agnes went with us to see—Mephistopheles.'

'What a strange fancy! He is only a sour, pleasure-jaded man. If I were not so ill, I would speak to him myself; but you are right not to do so; that is your husband's place, who has brought him here. Let things be as they are till Friday.'

Harry sighed, but perforce assented. Friday came, and Mr Balfour went as he had designed, but not without stating at breakfast his intention

of returning on the ensuing Monday or Tuesday at latest, and even making an engagement with Charley to spend the latter evening with him at the theatre.

'Do you happen to know when my husband will be home?' inquired Harry timidly.

'No; madam. He was good enough to say, however, that his absence was to make no difference to my remaining here as his guest.'

This reply, which might easily have been made offensive, was delivered with the most studied courtesy: it cut the hostess's ground from under her; for it had answered the very objection which she had intended to imply. She felt herself not only defeated, but reproved.

'Let us hope you will both return together,' said she.

'I do not think that very probable,' answered Mr Balfour slowly.

An hour later, and he had departed; his hostess, under pretence of being engaged with her sick friend up-stairs, not having so much as shaken his hand. Charles, indignant at this slight, would have accompanied him to the railway station, but Balfour would not hear of it. For this he had two reasons: in the first place, he was anxious to keep his route secret; and secondly, it was a part of his system to give the young man no sort of trouble or inconvenience on his account. He wished every association that linked them together to be one of pleasure.

Mrs Basil, as we have said, had not made her appearance that morning below stairs; she was, in fact, no better, but rather worse; that news from Lingmoor, outwardly borne so well, had shaken her to the core. Still, no sooner had Balfour left, than she made shift to rise, and even came down to dinner. She discussed with Charley, who had a considerable regard for her, the character of their late guest—not with hostility, as his mother was wont to do, but with the air of one who asks for information, and has confidence in the verdict which she seeks. The lad, flattered by this implied compliment to his sagacity, answered her questions readily enough. He praised his friend, of course, and thought he praised him even when he spoke ill of him. He repeated his pungent sayings, and served up his anecdotes—such of them as were adapted at least for the ears of the ladies—anew. By this means he hoped to bring his hearers to a better opinion of so capital a fellow; and in Mrs Basil's case, he apparently succeeded. His mother still reiterated her opinion that Mr Balfour was a dangerous personage, and not a fit companion for any young man. Charles smiled at this, for it was the almost literal fulfilment of a prophecy which Balfour had made to him, and believed in that gentleman's sagacity, accordingly, more than ever. Women were so ludicrously prejudiced; the fact of Mrs Basil's—'the white witch'—not being so was an exception that proved the rule. She had been evidently interested in his anecdotes, of one of which she had even requested to hear the particulars twice over; not that, in his own judgment, it was the best, but being of a weird sort, it had probably struck her fancy. It had lost in the telling too—for he did not pretend to have the gift of narrative, as Mr Balfour had—and his mother had seen in the story in question nothing at all.

Mrs Basil came down-stairs no more after that

evening. She grew worse and worse, and was not only confined to her room, but to her bed. Harry was not much with her; she seized with avidity this opportunity of being alone with Charley to undo, as far as she could, Mr Balfour's work with him. This was not hard, for the boy was a creature of impulse, and swayed for good or ill with equal ease. But she discovered that it would be useless to attempt henceforth to conceal from him the nature of his future prospects. He was now firmly convinced that he was the heir to a large fortune, and she regretted too late that she had left the disclosure to a stranger. What grieved her much more, and with reason, was, that an attempt which she now made to bring the influence of Agnes to bear upon him, proved unsuccessful; the girl resolutely refused to come to the house in the absence of its master, and contrary, as she knew, to his express commandment. Charley himself, too, whose visits to Mr Aird's studio had been intermitted for some time, was received in Soho with coldness. It was not in Harry's nature to understand this independence of spirit, and she deeply deplored it, on her son's account. She had looked to this young girl to be his guardian angel, and had never anticipated that she could possibly decline to watch over a charge so precious. She would not allow, even to herself, that her son's own conduct was as much the cause of this as her husband's ill favour; but she saw in it, clearly enough, the mark of the cloven hoof, the work of Balfour.

Sick Mrs Basil could give her small comfort, though she did not attempt to defend their late visitor, as she had so unwarrantably appeared to do, when discussing him with Charley.

'The man is gone, my dear,' said she wearily; 'perhaps he may never come back: let us not meet troubles half-way. Charley has a kind good heart'—for 'the white witch' shewed great favour to the lad at all times—'and all will come right at last.'

She seemed too ill and weary to argue the matter, and Harry left her, as she thought, to repose. No sooner was she gone, however, than the closed lids of Mrs Basil were opened wide, and revealed a sleepless and unutterable woe. Her sharp, pinched face shewed pain and fear. Her parched lips muttered unceasingly words like these, which were perhaps the ravings of her fevered brain: 'I am sure of it now, quite sure; those stags, those stags! There is no room for hope. His heart has become a stone, which no power can soften. It is no use to speak, or rather I am like one in a dream who watches murder done, and cannot cry out.'

CHAPTER XLII.—THE MINE AT MIDNIGHT.

Mr Balfour, for so we must call him now, since he is attired respectably, travels first-class, and, moreover, even looks like a gentleman, did not go to the Midlands, as he had given out was his purpose, but took his ticket to Plymouth, to which place the railway had just extended in those days. He bought neither book nor newspaper, but sat in the corner with his hat drawn over his eyes, for the whole nine hours, thinking. From Plymouth he posted to Turlock, where he arrived late at night, and without having broken fast since morning. He took no pains either to divulge or conceal his

name; he asked no questions, nor was asked any, except, 'whether he preferred to sleep between sheets or blankets'—for Turlock was still an out-of-the-way region, and the little inn about three-quarters of a century behind our modern caravansaries with their 'daily fly-bills' and 'electric bells.'

After dinner, which he scarcely touched, he wandered out; it was his habit to do so, as he told the hostler, who was also the night-chamberlain, and did not return till long after midnight. He observed—as he gave the man half-a-crown for sitting up for him to so late an hour—that the moon looked very fine upon the sea.

'You must be a painter, I guess, sir,' said the hostler, with a grin of intelligence.

'Why?' asked Balfour sharply. 'What makes you think that?'

'Well, sir,' returned the man apologetically, 'I mean no offence; but it is always the gentlemen-painters—or, at least, so they say at Gethin, and I wish more of 'em came here—as is so free with their money, and so fond of the moon.'

'Lunatics, eh?' said the new arrival, with a loud quick laugh. 'Well, I'm no painter, my friend.'

Then he took his candle and retired to his room, but not to bed. He disarranged the bed-clothes and rumbled the pillow, then walked softly to and fro in his slippers until morning. On the following day, he made no attempt to visit his newly acquired property, but strolled about the harbour, or stood in sheltered and, therefore, secluded, places in the rocks, watching the winter sea. His meals at the inn were sent down almost as they were served up, yet he shewed no sign of weakness or fatigue, but in the evening sallied forth as before. The night was very cloudy, with driving showers; and the landlady good-naturedly warned him of the danger of venturing on the cliff-path, which was narrow, and had been broken in places by a late storm.

'I will take care,' said he mechanically.

'Perhaps you would like supper—some cold meat, or something—since you have eaten so little, placed in your sitting-room, against your return?'

'Yes, yes,' said he approvingly; 'you are right; I shall doubtless be hungry to-night.' Then he went out into the bleak black night.

He hung about the harbour as before, until near eleven, when all the lights of the little town had faded away, save that at the inn which was burning for him alone; then he climbed the cliff, and pushed southward along the very path against the dangers of which he had been cautioned. He walked fast too, with his gaze fixed before him, like one who has an appointment of importance for which there is a fear of being late. Presently, he struck inland over the down, when he began to move less quickly, and to peer cautiously before him. All was dark: the grass on which he trod seemed to be black, until he suddenly arrived at a large circular patch of it which *was* black, and made the surrounding soil less sombre by contrast. This was the mouth of a great pit; and he sat on the brink of it, with his face to seaward, and his ear in his hollowed hand listening. Nothing was to be heard, however, but the occasional scud of the rain and the ceaseless roar of the now distant waves. Far out to sea, there was a round red light, which fell upon him at regular intervals, its absence making the place which it had filled more

dark than elsewhere. It had a weird effect, as though some evil spirit was keeping watch upon him, but he knew it for what it was—the revolving lamp of a light-house. Presently, in the same direction as the red light, he perceived a white one, which, though moving slowly, was certainly advancing towards him, nor did it, like the other, become obscure.

‘He is coming,’ said Balfour to himself with a great sigh. He had begun to have doubts of the other’s keeping his appointment; though, indeed, it was not yet the time that he had himself fixed for it. The light came on, quite close to the ground, and with two motions—across as well as along. It was that of a lantern, which guided thus the footsteps of a tall stout man, who bore upon his shoulders a ladder so long that it both projected above his head and trailed behind him. Balfour rose up, and stood motionless in the path of the new-comer till this light fell full upon him. ‘Hollo!’ cried the man, a little startled by the white worn face that so suddenly confronted him, although he had been looking for it. ‘Is that you, Mr Balfour?’

‘Yes. Hush! There is no need to mention names.’

‘Quite true, sir; but you gave me quite a turn,’ remonstrated the other, ‘coming out of the darkness like a ghost. This Wheal Danes, at midnight, puts queer thoughts into one’s head.’

‘John Trevethick was not afraid of coming here,’ observed Balfour.

‘Well, so he always said. He told me at the last, that he only pretended to believe in any of the foolish stories that folks talk about, and in favour of which he used to argue. But he’s dead and gone, and that don’t make this place less uncanny. Nobody since his time has been a-near it; they think he haunts the pit, it seems, so everybody gives it a wide berth, both night and day. We shall see, however, and pretty soon, I hope, whether that notion cannot be got over. Why, in six months’ time we ought to have a hundred men at work here.’

‘Let us hope so. But in the meantime you say nobody comes here even in the daytime, eh?’

‘Never. The place lies out of the way, you see; about midway between the cliff-path and the road.’

‘That’s well,’ said Balfour mechanically. ‘And you have not been babbling to any one of our prospects, Mr Coe—nor of me, I hope?’

‘Certainly not, sir; that was the first article of our partnership, as I understood. Not a soul at Gethin has heard a whisper of Wheal Danes, or of your coming; they think I’m fast asleep at my own house, this instant. But it’s been hard work lugging this cursed ladder up here in such a break-neck night as this, I can tell you, and I am glad enough to rest a bit.’

‘Well, it’s all over now, Mr Coe.’

‘Except that I have got to take it back again,’ grumbled Solomon.

‘True, I had forgotten that. We must not leave it here, must we?’

‘Of course not. I do not complain of the trouble, however, only you must admit I’ve kept my trust under some little difficulties, eh, partner?’ and Solomon chuckled self-approval.

‘You will be paid in full for all, my good sir,’ answered Balfour gravely; ‘that is,’ he added hastily, ‘if the mine should turn out as you

predict. How deep is it? That ladder of yours will surely never reach the bottom!’

‘No, indeed. Did I not tell you that there are three levels, each about the same depth? The copper lode lies at the bottom of the last, in the north-eastern corner. You will find I have concealed nothing from you. Well, I have got my breath again now. Are you ready, Mr Balfour?’

‘Quite; but walk slowly, I beg, for your lantern is very dim.’

‘Yes, yes. But wait a minute: I came here yesterday and hid something.’ Solomon seated himself upon the edge of the pit, with his legs hanging over, and began to peer and feel about him.

‘Take care what you are at,’ cried Balfour eagerly; ‘you may slip down and kill yourself, sliding along like that.’

Solomon laughed contemptuously. ‘Never fear, sir; I have had too many mischances with mines to fear them. I have fallen down worse places, and been shut up in others far deeper and darker than Wheal Danes, without food or candle, for a week, and yet lived through it. The shaft has not yet been dug, I reckon, as will prove—Oh, here’s the torch.’

He dragged from under the overhanging rim of the pit a piece of wood like a bludgeon, one end of which was smeared with pitch; and placing the lantern with its back to the wind, pushed the stick inside, which came out a torch, flaming and dropping flame.

‘There’s our corpse-candle!’ cried Coe triumphantly; ‘that would keep us without witnesses, even if any one were so bold as, in a night like this, to venture near Wheal Danes, to trespass on Tom Tiddler’s ground, where we shall pick up the gold and the silver.’ There was a wild excitement, quite foreign to his habit, about this man, and he whirled the torch about his head in flaring circles.

‘Keep your wits steady, if you please,’ observed Balfour sternly.

‘It is over now, sir, and I am in the counting-house again,’ answered Solomon submissively. ‘I felt a little exhilarated at the prospect of plucking a fruit that has been ripening for fifty years, that’s all. This Wheal Danes is the very aloe of mines, and it is about to blossom for us only. You had better take the torch yourself; the lantern will serve for me; but just shew a light here, while I place the ladder.’

Balfour held the blazing pine aloft, and disclosed the gaping mouth of the old pit, its margin wet with the rain, and its sheer sides slippery with the damp of ages.

‘It would be easy enough to get down without this contrivance,’ observed Solomon grimly, as he carefully adjusted the ladder, the foot of which was lost in gloom; ‘but it would take us some trouble to find our way back again without wings.’

‘In daylight, however, I daresay it looks easier,’ said Balfour carelessly.

‘It may look so, but it ain’t. Nothing but a seagull ever goes in and out of Wheal Danes; even the bats keep there, where indeed they are snug and warm enough.’

‘It doesn’t feel very warm at present,’ replied the other, who did not seem to be in a hurry to explore this unpromising territory.

‘Ay, but you wait till we get to the lower level: you might live there, if the rats would let you, for a whole winter, and never need a fire.’

'Oh, there are rats, are there? Why, what do they live upon?'

'Well, that's *their* look-out,' laughed Solomon; 'they would be very glad to have us, no doubt. It would be only just in my case, for I have lived on them before now: with rats and water, a man may do very well for a week or two.'

'What! there is water laid on in this establishment, is there?'

'No; the low levels are quite dry. But, come, let us see for ourselves. We are losing time. I will start first, and do you follow close upon me, but without treading on my fingers;' and Solomon placed his heavy foot upon the first rung.

'No, no,' said Balfour, drawing back: 'I will not trust myself on the same ladder with a man of your weight. When you are at the bottom, give me a call, and then I'll join you.'

'As you like, sir,' responded Solomon civilly; but his thick lips curled contemptuously, and he muttered: 'So this man is lily-livered after all: so much the better; it is well to have a coward for a partner.'

The next moment his descending form was lost in the gloom.

Balfour waited, torch in hand, until an 'All right,' that sounded like a voice from the tomb, assured him that his companion had reached terra-firma. Then he descended very carefully, and joined him.

'Stand close to the wall, sir, while I move the ladder,' said Coe: 'your head don't seem made for these deep places. Ah, here's the spot. This is a drop of twenty feet.'

'And what is the depth of the last level?'

'Five-and-twenty. But don't you be afraid; the ladder will just reach it, only you won't have so much to hold on by at the top. It's only the getting down that's unpleasant: you'll find going back quite easy work. And, then, just think of the lode!'

Solomon began to be anxious lest his companion's fears should induce him to give up the expedition altogether. It had never entered into his mind that what was so easy to himself could prove so formidable to another; and, besides, he had somehow concluded that Balfour was a man of strong nerves.

'Make haste,' said the latter, in the tone of one who has achieved some mental victory: 'let us go through with it.'

In the second level it was perceptibly warmer; dark noiseless objects began to flit about the torch; and once something soft struck against Balfour's foot, and then scampered away.

He looked behind him, and not a trace of light was to be discerned, while before him was impenetrable gloom, except for the feeble gleam of his companion's lantern. Above him the roof was just discernible, from which long strings of fungi, white and clammy, hung down, and brushed against his face as he moved slowly forward.

'Come on!' said Solomon impatiently, whose spirits seemed to rise in this familiar scene. 'We are only a few score yards from Golconda.'

Balfour stopped short. 'I thought you said there was another level?' There was a strange look of disappointment in his face, and even of rage.

'Yes, yes, and here it is,' cried the other, putting down the ladder, which he had carried from place

to place. 'It is only depth that separates us from it. They dug well, those Romans, but left off, as you shall see, upon the very threshold of fortune. You have only to be a little careful, because the ladder does not quite reach.'

He descended as before in advance, while Balfour followed slowly and cautiously. 'How steep and smooth the rock is,' observed he, examining its surface.

'Yes, indeed: it is like a wall of marble. But what matters that? It baffles the rats, but not us. Here is the land of gold, here is— What the devil are you at?'

Solomon, in his impatience, had stridden on to the object of his desires; and Balfour, halting midway in his descent, suddenly retraced his footsteps, and having reached the top, was dragging the ladder up after him.

Solomon heard this noise, with which his ear was familiar, and his tone had some alarm in it as he cried out: 'I say, no tricks, Mr Balfour.'

There was no reply. He hastened back to the spot he had just left, and from thence could dimly perceive his late companion sitting on the verge of the steep wall, peering down upon him.

'Come, come, a joke is a joke,' remonstrated Coe. 'What a fellow you are to be at such games when an important matter is at stake! Why, here is the lode, man.'

'It is very valuable, I daresay, Mr Coe, but it is worth more to one man than to two.'

'Great Heaven! what do you mean?' cried Solomon, while a sudden sweat bedewed his forehead. 'You would not murder a man to dissolve a partnership?'

'Certainly not. I shall leave him to die, that's all. He and the rats will have to settle it together. Six months hence, perhaps, we may have a picnic here, and explore the place. Then we shall find, where you are now standing, some well-picked bones, and the metal part of your lantern. That will cause quite an excitement; and we shall search further, and in the north-east corner there will be found a copper lode. I will take your word for that.'

'Mr Balfour, I am sure you will not do this,' pleaded the wretched man. 'It is not in man's nature to treat a fellow-creature with such barbarity. You are trying to frighten me, I know; and I own you have succeeded. I know what it is to be shut up in desolate dark places alone, out of reach of succour; and even for eight-and-forty hours or so, it is terrible.'

'What must it be, then, to suffer so for twenty years?'

It was a third voice that seemed to wake the echoes of that lonesome cavern. Solomon looked up in terror, and beheld a third face, that of Robert Balfour, but transfigured. He held the glowing brand above him, so that his deep-lined features could be distinctly seen, and they were all instinct with a deadly rage and malice. There was a fire in his eyes that might well have been taken for that of madness, and Solomon's heart sank within him as he looked.

'Mr Balfour,' said he in a coaxing voice, 'come and look at your treasure. It sparkles in the light of my lantern like gold, and you shall have it all, if you please; I do not wish to share it with you.'

'So you take me for a madman, do you? Look again; look fixedly upon me, Solomon Coe. You

do not recognise me even yet? I do not wonder. It is not you that are dull, but I that am so changed by wrong and misery. My own mother does not know me, nor the woman of whom you robbed me nineteen years ago.—Yes, you know me now. I am Richard Yorke!’

‘Mercy, mercy!’ gasped Solomon, dropping on his knees.

Richard laughed long and loud; the echoes of his ghastly mirth slowly died away; and when his voice was heard again it was stern and solemn. ‘It is my turn at last, man; I am the judge to-day, as you were the witness nineteen years ago, who doomed me, wrongfully, to shame and misery. Night and day I have had this hour in my mind; the thought of it has been my only joy—in chains and darkness, in toil and torment, fasting and wakeful on my prison pillow, I have thought of nothing else! I did not know how it would come about, but I was sure that it would come. You swore falsely once that I was a thief; I am now about to be a murderer, and your whitening bones will not be able to witness against me.’

‘I never swore it, Mr Yorke,’ pleaded Solomon passionately.

‘Your memory is defective,’ answered Richard gloomily; ‘you forget that I was in court myself on that occasion. You did your very worst to blacken me before judge and jury, and you succeeded.’

‘But it was Trevethick—it was father-in-law who urged me to do it; it was indeed.’

‘I know it,’ replied the other coldly: ‘he was a greater villain than yourself, but unhappily an older one. Death has robbed me of him, and made my vengeance incomplete. Still there is something left for me. While you die slowly here— But no; I shall wait at Turlock for that to happen. A strong man like you, who has rats to live upon, may last ten days, perhaps. Well, when you are dead, I shall return to your London house, and lead your son to ruin. You permitted me to begin the work, in hopes of getting half this mine; I shall finish it, while you are in sole possession of the whole of it!’

‘Devil!’ cried Solomon furiously.

‘The appellation is a true one, my good sir; but I was a man once. Evil is now my good, thanks to your teaching. Look at me, look at me, and see what you have brought me to at eight-and-thirty! You almost drove me mad, and it was easy, for I had the Carew blood in my veins; but I contrived to keep my wits for the enjoyment of this hour. I feel very old, and have few pleasures left, you see. It is impossible, unfortunately, to return here and see you rot; there would be danger in it; just the least risk in the world of somebody coming here to look for us. I must be off now, too, for there is a worthy man sitting up for me at the inn, and I have got to take this ladder back to Gethin.’

A cry of mingled rage and despair burst forth from Richard’s foe.

‘What! you had calculated upon the absence of that ladder producing suspicion? It is curious how great wits jump together: that had also struck me. I shall take it back, for I well know where it ought to be; I am quite familiar with your house at Gethin, as you may remember, perhaps. You may keep the lantern, which will not be missed; but, if you will take my advice, you will put out

the light, to preserve the candle—as an article of food. Put it somewhere where the rats cannot eat it, and it may prolong your torments half a day. You can also eat the horn of the lantern, but you will doubtless preserve that for a *bonne bouche*. You are not superstitious, else I would suggest that your father-in-law’s spirit is exceedingly likely to haunt that north-eastern corner down yonder.’

Here there was a dull scrambling noise, a violent struggle as of feet and hands against a wall, and then a heavy thud.

‘Now, that is very foolish of you, Solomon, to attempt to get out of a place which you yourself informed me could never be escaped from without wings. I sincerely hope you have not hurt yourself much. I hear you moving slowly about again, so I may leave you without anxiety. Good-bye, Solomon.’ Richard waited a moment, a frightful figure of hate and triumph, peering down into the pit beneath, where all was now dark. ‘You are too proud to speak to a convict, perhaps. Well, well, that is but natural in so honest a man. I take my leave, then. You have no message, I conclude, for home?’

An inarticulate cry, like that of a wild animal caught in a snare, was the only reply.

‘That is the worst of letting his candle go out,’ mused Richard aloud; ‘some rat has got hold of him already.’ Then, with a steady foot and smiling face, which shewed how all his previous fears had been assumed, he retraced his steps, and mounted to the upper air: the sky was clearer now; and, casting the torch, for which he had no further need, far into the mine, and shouldering the ladder, he started for Gethin at good speed. It was past two o’clock before he reached his inn at Turlock; but before he retired to rest, he sat down to the supper that had been prepared for him, but without the appetite which he had anticipated.

A ROMANCE OF SCIENCE.

PART II.—OPERATIONS IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

M. BIOT and his colleagues having concluded satisfactorily their scientific operations in France and Spain, the former read an interesting account of the same before the French Institute, in January 1810. Not satisfied, however, with the results of the multitude of astronomical and terrestrial observations which had been made, it was considered necessary to extend the great arc of the meridian as far north of Paris as it was to the south, and repeat them at different stations, especially at its northern extremity. This could only be done by connecting the trigonometrical survey of France with that of Great Britain, rendering observations on linear measurement unnecessary, so that they could be confined to pendulum observations, for ascertaining the intensity of gravitation in higher latitudes.

Notwithstanding the ardour of these enthusiastic French savants, who would have braved any danger in promoting their scientific pursuits, the state of Europe, and especially that of France, was so unsettled in those troublous times, that many years elapsed before their operations could be renewed. Peace being happily restored in 1815, men of science again turned their attention to experiments for ascertaining the exact figure of the earth by the oscillations of the pendulum at different latitudes, and its application to the metrical system, as the

unalterable basis for a universal standard of measures and weights.

Though British statesmen and philosophers at that period were not in favour of this system being adopted in our country, yet with regard to the experiments, the French Institute was apprised that every facility would be given to carry out the objects of such a mission within the United Kingdom. Accordingly, M. Biot was delegated for that purpose, and furnished with suitable instruments. At first it was feared that the meridians of Great Britain, being to the west of France, would affect the union of the two national surveys so as to prevent arrival at that absolutely true result which was desired. But M. Biot, on examining the trigonometrical survey of the British Isles—which, in his Memoir, he informs us was commenced shortly after the suppression of the rebellion in 1745—its connection with the French coast, and the excellent instruments by which it was accomplished, pronounced it faultless, and the small degree of westing in the grand arc of the meridian, as of an infinitesimal value in correcting any presumed error. The survey in question was begun by General Roy, and continued afterwards by Colonel Mudge of the Royal Engineers, who, at the time of M. Biot's visit in 1817, had finished the triangulation from the Land's End in England, to the island of Unst in Scotland, furnishing the basis of a meridional arc of about eleven degrees of latitude. This added to the arc of France and Spain, the learned savant considered would finally solve the question of the curvature of the earth, and absolutely determine the basis of the mètre.

It is pleasing to learn that the British government of that day—namely, in May 1817—so shortly after the sanguinary wars with France, issued orders that this learned Frenchman should be exempt from all restrictions the moment he landed on English soil.

As it was necessary that he should reach the northern parts of the British Isles during the summer, when the weather was most favourable, he deemed it unnecessary to remain any length of time in England. Accordingly, he at once proceeded to Edinburgh, and fixed his first station in Leith Fort. Here he received every assistance from Colonel Elphinstone of the Royal Engineers, who not only allowed him men to set up his instruments, but furnished him with a portable observatory. This was placed on the terrace of the fort, and his repeating circle—a new and improved instrument—so fixed that the observer could see on all sides of the horizon. His pendulum was also fixed with great solidity, on a heavy stone slab, with bands of iron. At first his observations were not so successful as he expected; but with the assistance of Captain Richard Mudge, son of Colonel Mudge, he soon completed all the necessary observations to his satisfaction.

On discussing the question with Colonel Mudge as to the best point in the Orkney Islands, within view of the mainland of Scotland, as the farthest station north, he was advised to proceed direct to Unst, the most northerly of the Shetland Isles. By this means he would add two degrees to the length of the great arc from Formentera; and the summits of these islands being connected by triangulation with the intermediate angles of Fair Isle and that of Foula, his position was as good as in Orkney. M. Biot saw the advantage of this;

and, further, he found that the general system of the British and French operations would be brought more into harmony with the great arc of the meridian at Formentera; as the island of Unst, being the northern extremity of that arc, placed it two degrees more to the east. By this prolongation, also, of the British line, the arc was extended in length to one-fourth the distance from the pole to the equator; furnishing thereby a most complete determination of the fundamental basis of the mètre, and thoroughly European in its character.

The prospect of concluding this grand project so satisfactorily occupied the thoughts of the enthusiastic French philosopher, and he was eager to carry out the plan. Under ordinary circumstances, M. Biot would have found it no easy matter to convey his instruments and heavy apparatus to the stormy island of ancient Thule. But all anxiety on this head was removed by the government placing H.M.S. *Investigator*, a brig of war, commanded by Captain George Thomas, at his disposal. On board this vessel he embarked, with Captain Mudge as assistant, with all his apparatus, portable observatory, great stone slabs with iron bands for the pendulum and circle, besides many instruments used by the engineers in the British trigonometrical survey. In those days there were no steamers, so that the passage to the Shetland Isles was long and tedious when vessels encountered contrary winds, or got becalmed in the impetuous tide-currents of the Pentland Firth, or the roost of Sumburgh. Such was the case in this instance, so that it was a week before the *Investigator* reached the Orkney Isles, and it took two days longer to beat up against wind and current to the Shetland group, sighting Fair Isle midway between.

At length, on the 18th July, M. Biot came within view of the Shetland Isles, where the promontory of Sumburgh Head presents its rugged front to the tempestuous surges of the Atlantic on the west, and the German Ocean on the east. To the lively Frenchman, who had come from the sunny south, the aspect of the country where he intended to remain for some months was anything but inviting. He could not help contrasting its desolate appearance with that of Spain, where his operations were first carried on in view of 'that smiling country, the garden of Valencia, where oranges, citrons, and flowers perfume the air around the tomb of Scipion, or among the august ruins of ancient Sagonte. Here, on approaching the rocky shore undermined by the waves, the eye perceives a desert humid land, covered with stones and moss; the mountains stripped bare by the inclemency of the weather; not a tree, not a bush within view to soften its savage aspect; only here and there some scattered huts, surrounded by scant herbage, where to find shelter from the dense fogs that obscure the sky.'

With these gloomy impressions of his sojourn in Shetland, he arrived at the town of Lerwick. Here he found unexpected pleasures in store, from the reception given to him by the leading inhabitants, and their willingness to forward in every way the object of his mission. He found that, though these islands present a sterile and inhospitable aspect, the Shetlanders were the most hospitable people he had ever seen. Here he met Dr Edmonston, the author of one of the best works on Shetland, from which writers at the present day

glean a great deal of information—and too often without acknowledging the source. That gentleman gave him a letter to his brother, the proprietor of Bunes, in Unst, who assisted him greatly in his work.

Arrived at Unst, it took some time to fix upon a spot the best suited for taking observations. At first, it was intended to establish an observatory on the highest mountain in the northernmost part of the island; but this was abandoned, on account of the difficulty in carrying the heavy stone slabs and instruments up the precipitous hills. The *Investigator* cast anchor in Balta Sound, and an attempt was made to form a station on Balta Island, at its entrance. M. Biot went on shore to examine its capabilities. He found it very much exposed to furious gales of wind, extremely humid, without any human habitation, and the difficulty of finding a sheltered place where to fix the pendulum with solidity; so that he feared, under these disadvantages, that it would compromise the success of his operations. Consequently, Captain Mudge and he decided to return to Unst, and solicit the hospitality, for themselves and their equipage, of one of the landed proprietors, whose house was the only one within view; fortunately, this was Bunes, the residence of Mr Edmonston, situated at the extreme head of the land-locked harbour formed by Balta Island at its entrance, and presenting an admirable site to erect his observatory.

On delivering the letter from Dr Edmonston, he was received in the most hospitable manner, and every facility given to aid in setting up the instruments. A great sheepfold, with high stone walls for sheltering sheep in winter, so as to resist all tempests, received the pendulum and its heavy stone pedestal. The portable observatory was erected in Mr Edmonston's garden, in which was placed the great repeating circle and the chronometers. It was with some trouble that these were landed; but the officers of the *Investigator* got all hands to work, and it was quickly done. At last, everything was ready to commence operations on the 2d of August; and by the 17th, M. Biot and his coadjutor, Captain Mudge, had taken and computed satisfactorily two hundred and seventy astronomical observations of latitude, and eight sets of experiments with the pendulum. Unfortunately, Captain Mudge became affected in his health by the rigorous climate of Shetland, and the zealous application to his task, so that it became necessary for him to leave for a more genial clime in the south. A whaling vessel having put in at Balta Sound, on her voyage from Spitzbergen to Leith, he took advantage of the opportunity to return home.

M. Biot was now left single-handed to continue his observations, which it was impossible to perform without two persons attending to the repeating circle—one to observe the stars, the other to note the indications of the level. In this dilemma, he consulted his host, Mr Edmonston, who shewed an amount of interest in the success of M. Biot's arduous task, that elicited the sincere and high encomiums of the learned savant—who also found an amount of intelligence and appreciation of his mission among the Shetlanders generally that seems to have surprised him. Mr Edmonston suggested that for registering the observations he might employ a young carpenter, who had shewn unusual intelligence and dexterity in

erecting the observatory, and who, like most of his countrymen, could write and cipher. He followed the advice of his hospitable entertainer, and gave him some lessons several days before the departure of Captain Mudge. After that officer's departure, he continued the task with even more precision than his predecessor, or if he had been a learned savant; 'because,' remarks M. Biot, 'he observed and marked my level indicator with all the faithfulness of a machine,' and in a short time without almost an error.

With the able assistance of this young carpenter, M. Biot continued his observations, day and night, for two months, when he arrived at results so conclusive and perfect, that he deemed it unnecessary to prosecute them any further. During that period they had taken thirty-eight sets of pendulum observations, each from five to six hours; fourteen hundred observations of latitude, in fifty-five sets, taken both to the south and north of the zenith, and about fourteen hundred observations of altitude, of the sun and stars, to regulate the chronometers. The general result of these numerous observations gave exactly the same value in determining the curvature of the earth, by measurement of the great arc, as those obtained in Spain and France. In this manner, by the effective assistance accorded on all hands, M. Biot succeeded in executing his task in the British Isles in a fewer number of months, single-handed, than it took years in France and Spain, with three colleagues and a large staff, to correct and extend the observations of his predecessor, M. Mechain. Of course, there was no necessity for his continuing the lines of the French and Spanish trigonometrical surveys, in consequence of the British survey being completed to his hand. It is pleasing, therefore, to find that though up to the present day the metrical system of measures and weights has not been introduced into this country, yet, in determining the basis of that system, Great Britain has impartially contributed to a moiety of the operations.

At Bunes, the estate of Mr Edmonston, a memorial may be seen at the present day, characteristic of the event. This is nothing more or less than a simple monument, constructed of the two large slabs of stone brought from Leith in the *Investigator*, and on which M. Biot fixed his scientific instruments. The one belonging to the astronomical circle lies flat upon the ground, forming a kind of pedestal for the other, which stands upright, as when used for the pendulum and clock. Though corroded, the iron bars from which the pendulum hung still remain, and on the tablet the following inscription is cut in legible letters: 'To this stone were attached the clock and pendulum employed by the French philosopher BIOT, and on the one on which it rests stood his repeating circle. The distinguished English philosopher KATER placed his repeating circle on this stone also. The former was sent by the Institute of France in the summer of 1817, and the latter by the Royal Society of London in the summer of 1818, to determine their experiments and observations on the figure of the earth. These memorials remain as pleasing and lasting remembrances of the splendid talents, great worth, and amiable manners of these eminent men, by their friend Thomas Edmonston, 21st October, 1818.'

The mention of Captain Kater's name—the inventor of Kater's azimuth compass—shews that

our English philosophers were not behindhand in these observations for determining the absolute figure of the earth. When M. Biot reached London, on his return to France, he communicated the satisfactory result of his observations at Unst to Sir Joseph Banks, which doubtless led to Kater's mission in the following year. In London, M. Biot met Humboldt, then a young man, but famous in the scientific world; and his colleague, M. Arago, came over from Paris to join in some final observations at the Greenwich Observatory. At that time the Astronomer-royal was Mr Pond, who gave the foreign savants every facility in concluding their great work on British soil. This was accomplished speedily and satisfactorily, M. Biot and his confrères being in raptures with the magnificent instruments in the observatory.

Having completed these observations in England, MM. Biot and Arago returned to France, where they carefully computed the entire series of operations, so as to unite the British with the continental arc of the meridian. The result confirmed the calculations that had been previously made, so that not the shadow of an error was found to throw doubt upon the solution of the grand problem. All this was publicly stated by M. Biot, in a Memoir which he read in April 1818, at the annual meeting of the four academies in Paris, to the satisfaction of the French government and the nation. Thus the standard of the metrical system of measures and weights is established upon a basis the most unalterable of any that human ingenuity could devise.

KILL OR CURE.

ONE evening, late in November, an elderly man, with beetling brows, piercing gray eyes, thin compressed lips, and long bony hands, sat in a shabbily furnished room in a splendid old house, casting up accounts by the light of a single candle. The weather being cold, one of those baskets for live coals which are sometimes most appropriately called 'kill-joys,' glimmered in the huge grate. The door of the room, which opened into the fine oak-panelled hall, was ajar, and presently a servant-girl, bearing a light, flitted by from the staircase. Her master called her. 'Hi, Jenny! come here. What makes you look so scared? Is your mistress worse?'

'I'm afeard so, Sir Timothy.'

'Eh! what?—really bad?'

'Ye-es.'

'Going to die?'

'She says so, Sir Timothy, and oh! she looks it too. O sir,' cried the girl earnestly, blurring out what was on her soul, 'if she were to die without a doctor!'

This abnormal possibility shocked Sir Timothy Grabham also, the invalid being in a manner dear to him. It was a very general notion amongst his neighbours and tenants that the man was incapable of caring for anybody; but this was prejudice; he did care for his wife, after his own fashion. It was not perhaps an enthusiastic attachment, or a deep one; I don't suppose that he loved her as well as a good bargain, for example: but comparisons are odious.

He remained silent for a while, looking down, and then muttered: 'I declared that I would never send for that fellow Radford again; which was an error on his part; he had never made that rash

observation—it was Mr Radford who had vowed he would not come.

'Shall Charles go for Dr Radford, please, Sir Timothy?'

'There's no one else; so I suppose he must.'

Jenny vanished in search of that footman-groom-gardener named Charles; and her master tried to get back into his sum, but made a mistake of twopence-farthing, and lapsed into reverie.

Sir Timothy Grabham was not a nice man, but if he had remained indifferent to his wife's condition, he would have been a monster. She had now, for thirty years, devoted herself to the difficult task of pleasing him; she had brought him money, and saved him money; born economical, she had developed the faculty into extreme meanness, to gain his approbation. Passion would have been out of place at his age, and hers, but he esteemed her.

After a hard day's work, Mr Radford had turned into bed with the snug conviction that he was going to remain undisturbed up to eight o'clock on the following morning, for his last 'lady's case' was going on as favourably as if civilisation had been unknown, and no fellow-creature looked to him for introduction into the world for the next fortnight to come. But at half-past eleven, his sleep was broken by the night-bell, and he had to wrench himself from his warm nook in the feathers, feel for his dressing-gown and slippers, blunder into his dressing-room, which looked out on the front of the house, and open the window. 'What is it?' he shouted, shivering as the frosty night-air blew in upon his face, and played about his unprotected legs.

'Please, sir, it's me.'

'Idiot!—your name?'

'Charles, from the Hall.'

'Then, Charles from the Hall, you may go back again, for I am not coming.'

'My lady is very ill, sir.'

'Can't help it. Tell your master that I won't attend him or his family, and he need send no more messages, as I shall muffle the night-bell.' And with these words the doctor banged down the window.

'What are you doing, John?' said a voice from the bed presently.

'Tying a stocking round the clapper of this confounded bell.'

'What for?'

'To get a good sleep, in spite of Sir Timothy Grabham.'

'Why, he has never sent for you!'

'He has, though, the insolent screw: his wife's ill.'

'Oh, well, don't tie up the bell, John; she may be really bad—dying, you know.'

'What is that to me?'

'I know they have treated us very badly; a rich man like that to refuse to pay for your attendance; it is unheard of! But other people might want you.'

'Not likely.'

'No, but it is just possible. Don't muffle the bell.'

I need hardly tell the married reader that the doctor got growling into bed, with the bell-clapper free to rouse him out again. In an hour's time the provoking bit of iron availed itself of that liberty, but for some minutes Mr Radford declined

to stir. Consideration for his wife's rest, however, at length induced him to turn out once more, and again go through the process of refrigeration.

'Sir Timothy's messenger again, I suppose?' he cried.

'No,' replied a well-known voice: 'I am here myself.'

'For what purpose, Sir Timothy Grabham, do you come and disturb me, when you know very well that I never intend to enter your doors again?'

'Ay, ay,' replied the voice from below; 'but this is not a time to bear malice. I tell you that my wife is dangerously ill—dying, I believe; and if she dies for want of medical assistance, you will be responsible.'

'Not so; the responsibility will all lie on your own shoulders. I am a poor man, working hard for my living, but no one ever knew me neglect a patient because he could not pay me. Two-thirds of my work is done for nothing, or next to nothing, and those who can afford it ought to take some share of the burden, more especially you, the lord of the manor, under whose protection the whole poor are placed by providence. Instead of which, you refuse to pay me for actual attendance upon yourself and your family for upwards of a year!'

'Stay, stay!' cried Sir Timothy: 'you mistake; I never refused to pay you; I only omitted to do so. You are really wrong to look upon it as a personal matter, because I never pay any one unless I am actually obliged. Why did you not bring an action? But come, let us see if we cannot do business together. Save my wife, and I will pay you a hundred pounds. There!'

'Eh?' said Mr Radford, rather staggered. 'But you know there is no taking your word for anything.'

'Come down, and let me in, and I will put the promise down in black and white,' said Sir Timothy.

'That sounds like business,' replied the doctor, not altogether sorry for an excuse for going to the aid of a dying woman. So he shut the window, put on some clothes, and admitted Sir Timothy Grabham, taking him into his consulting-room and lighting the gas.

'Now, how am I to word it?' inquired the baronet, taking up a pen, and arranging a sheet of foolscap before him. "*I promise to pay the sum of L.100 to Mr John Radford, surgeon, if he cures*"—

'No, no,' interrupted the doctor; 'it is only quacks who make such bargains as that; I must have my fee whether I am successful or not.'

'Very good—"*surgeon, for attendance upon my wife, kill or cure.*" Will that do?'

'Yes; that will do; but sign it.'

'Oh, oh! I forgot. How stupid!' And Sir Timothy appended his name to the document, which Mr Radford locked up in his desk; and then putting on his greatcoat and hat, he left the house with his successful visitor.

He found Lady Grabham very ill indeed, quite past human aid, in fact; and though he was indefatigable in his attendance, and performed that feat which is popularly called 'exhausting the resources of his art,' she sank on the third day. The widower was not inconsolable. The undertaker took some timber which had lately been felled, in part payment of expenses; and on the very day of the funeral, Sir Timothy let a farm, the lease of which had expired, at an increased rent, without having to do as much in the way of repairs as he had

anticipated; so that he was enabled to bear his domestic misfortune like a Spartan.

After a decent lapse of time, Mr Radford sent in a note referring to the promise which Sir Timothy Grabham had made him, and requesting a cheque for a hundred pounds; and no answer being vouchsafed to this communication, he presently wrote again in more urgent language; but the second letter was ignored as quietly as the first. Then the good doctor got angry, and meeting his debtor one day in the course of his rounds, he upbraided him with his conduct, and threatened to take legal proceedings.

'Quite right, doctor—quite right,' said Sir Timothy. 'Force me to pay you, and I will do it; but I never part with a farthing except under compulsion: it is against my principles; and I am sorry I cannot make an exception in your favour.'

So Mr Radford put the matter in the hands of a lawyer; and in due time the case came on. It was a gay day in the little country town, for the case excited a great deal of curiosity and amusement; the poor doctor, who was a general favourite, had been pitilessly chaffed, though everybody hoped for and anticipated his success; and the court was crowded with county magnates. It added to the attraction of the affair that Sir Timothy Grabham, with all his faults, had the merit of being consistent; he would not employ a lawyer, but conducted his own case. Of course the doctor's solicitor was jubilant, and quoted the proverb which avers that the man who so acts has a fool for his client. 'Not but what the case is clear enough,' he added; 'all the lawyers in London could not get him off paying up.'

And indeed it did seem simple. The doctor was put into the witness-box, and told his story; and Sir Timothy did not question the correctness of it; on the contrary, he openly said, that, to the best of his remembrance, everything had occurred exactly as described. 'But,' he added, 'I should like to look at the document which has been alluded to, and ask the plaintiff a question or two about it.'

The memorandum was handed to him, and he read it aloud: "*I promise to pay the sum of L.100 to Mr John Radford, surgeon, for attendance upon my wife, kill or cure.*" Exactly. Well, Mr Radford, did you cure her?'

'No; that was impossible.'

'Did you kill her?'

TRIFLES.

The griefs that fall to every share,
The heavier sorrows that life brings,
The heart can nerve itself to bear—
Great sorrows are half holy things.

But for the ills each hour must make,
The cares with every day renewed,
It seems scarce worth the while to take
Such little things with fortitude.

And he before whose wakened sight
The strongest enemies must fall,
Is overcome by foes so slight,
He scorns to hold them foes at all.

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